

BUST OF AUGUST VELADO

General Information about the sculpture:

The sculpture described later in this text is from the first century A.D. It is a bust (head sculpture) which represents the emperor August as *Pontifex Maximus* at the age of about 50 years. It was discovered in the theatre's *peristylum*.

It follows the style of Prima Porta and Via Labricata. It shows a severe expression and some marked features. A wide forehead (covered by the time's typical hair style, with a closed fringe) is crossed by faint wrinkles which continue down to the area between the eyebrows to form an angle.

The statue's eyes show a deep and brusque look, while its small mouth with thin lips are delimited by the deep corners of the mouth.

The head is covered by the gown (toga) which the *pontifex* wore in sacrificial ceremonies.

As for the technique, it is formed with energy and those features which are very emphasised and without any special hardness are stressed. The areas above the corners of the mouth are very expressive and the form of the chin and mouth are especially underlined. Locks of hair entwine and fall in different directions, thinning at the ends. The head was part of a sculpture of the whole body which was not found in the excavations.

Some theories say this piece of art is originally from a local studio and represents the founder of Emerita Augusta. Certainly, it was located in a privileged area of the theatre as a symbol of new power.

Scale and Materials

The tactile diagrams show the front view of the bust but they are reduced to a third of its actual size. In reality, it would be 38 centimetres tall.

Description

Lay your fingers down on the image and analyse the bust's contour. If you move up from the inferior part to the superior you can feel that the lines form an almost 90 degree angle. They immediately take you back up to the superior part of the sculpture, it is the gown that was mentioned before which marks its dignity. Continue down again to just where the gown forms a right angle and place your fingers on the outline, you will notice two series of three parallel lines (some larger than others) which go up, those are the pleats which the gown forms when falling down from the head. Move your hands closer to the centre, until you notice the outline of the face from the chin to the ears, the chin of the original sculpture is pronounced while here it is not. If you form a straight line while moving up very slowly from the chin to the nose you will notice a small relieve, the inferior lip, then the upper one and finally the nose. The original is broken and for that reason, the limits of this one are not well defined. Notice the ears which barely hide behind the pleats of the gown, closer to the centre of the sculpture you can feel how pronounced the cheekbones are. Also, notice the

eyes, the septum and the strongly marked forehead. A little higher you will find the hair: the fringe of which the locks entwine, is typical for the Roman times. The rest of the hair hides like the ears, behind the gown, which characterises the sculpture enormously.

Finally, go back to the inferior part of the sculpture and then up and cross the outline towards the chin. There you will notice the distance between the chin and the top of the neck. On the way you will find two relieves which indicate the measure of the neck, in its length and stylised form it has no kind of decorative object.